

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 201119Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4592

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC HONO

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24529

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

FOL TEL FROM UDORN DATED 20 NOV SENT ACTION IMMEDIATE BANGKOK
INFO IHIANG MAI, VIENTIANE REPEATED FOR UR INFO

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 1802

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, TH/LA

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: THAI-LAO BORDER CLASH

REF: A. UDORN 1789

B. UDORN 1770

1. POLITICAL ASSISTANT PONGKASET SUWANNAKON RETURNED FROM AN
EARLY MORNING (NOV 20) TRIP TO THE NONGKHAI-THA BO AREA AT 0930
WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

2. NEWSMEN AT THA BO STATED THAT YESTERDAY EVENING AT APPROXI-
MATELY 2000 FIVE FROGMEN RETURNED TO THE DAMAGED PATROL BOAT
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AGAIN UNDER THE COVER OF 25-30 MARINES POSITIONED ON THE ISLAND.

SOME NEWSMEN CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN THE FROGMEN CARRYING EXPLOSIVE CHARGES AND FUSE WIRE AS THE FROGMEN PREPARED FOR THE SWIM TO THE BOAT. ACCORDING TO LOCAL SPECULATION, THE BOAT IS NOW LOADED WITH EXPLOSIVES WHICH CAN BE DETONATED AT WILL. CONSULATE POLITICAL ASSISTANT WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN CONFIRMATION OF THE ABOVE FROM OTHER SOURCES.

2. IN NONGKHAI OUR POLITICAL ASSISTANT SPOKE WITH SUWIMUL PANGONQN PROVINCIAL DEFENSE IFFICER.

3. SUWIMUL IS CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING REPORTS THAT THE SEZEABLE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN THA BO IS CURRENTLY STOCK-PILING AT LEAST FIVE LITERS OF KEROSENE WITH EACH VIETNAMESE FAMILY. HE FEELS THAT EITHER THE VIETNAMESE FEAR THE LAO GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO CUT OFF THE TOWN'S SUPPLY OF ELEC-TRICITY FROM THE NAM NGUM DAM IN LAOS OR THEY ARE PLANNING SOME TYPE OF SABOTAGE.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE DAMAGED PATROL BOAT, SUWIMUL SAID THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT WOULD FIRST ATTEMPT, THROUGH DIPLO-MATIC CHANNELS, TO NEGOTIATE FOR LAO APPROVAL OF A PEACEFUL RECOVERY OPERATION. IF A PEACEFUL RECOVERY OPERATION IS NOT POSSIBLE, THAI MILITARY UNITS WOULD ATTEMPT AN ARMED RECOVERY OPERATION.

5. SUWIMUL INDICATED INDIRECTLY THAT AN ARMED RECOVERY OPERATION WOULD FAIL AND ALL CONCERNED REALIZED THIS. THE ARMED RECOVERY OPERATION WOULD PROBABLY DRAW HOSTILE FIRE SETTING THE STAGE FOR ANOTHER INCIDENT. IF BOTH PEACEFUL AND ARMED RECOVERY WERE TO FAIL, SUWIMUL SAID THE THAIS WOULD WELCOME A LAO PRECIPITATED OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES AS JUSTIFI-CATION FOR STRONG RETALIATORY ACTION.

6. SUWIMUL DESCRIBED THE PLAN FOR RETALIATION AS TWO FOLD. FIRST, T-28'S WOULD ATTEMPT TO BOMB AND SINK ONE OF THE THREE LAO STEEL PATROL BOATS ON STATION ALONG THE LAO BANK IN THE AREA OF THE THAI PATROL BOAT. SECONDLY, THE DAMAGED THAI PATROL BOAT WOULD BE DESTROYED, APPARENTLY UTILIZING THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGES REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN PLACED BY THE FROGMEN.

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7. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT FOUR T-28'S LOADED WITH BOMBS AND REOCKETS WERE SEEN CIRCLING THE CONFLICT AREA AT APPROXIMATELY 1500 YESTERDAY.

8. SUWIMUL ALSO CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THE JET HEARD FLYING OVER THE AREA AT 1400 NOV 18 (AS REPORTED REF B) WAS NOT THAI.

9. THERE IS NO VISIBLE INDICATION OF THAI REINFORCEMENTS IN

THE AREA. VDC, BPP, MARINE POLICE, AND MARINE FORCES ARE STILL IN POSITION. CONSULATE POLITICAL ASSISTANT WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF AT LEAST ONE COMPANY OF RTA. THIS COMPANY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN STATIONED IN SANGKHOM DISTRICT, NONGKHAI PROVINCE. THE TWO TANKS AND TWO APC'S AT THE SCENE ARE FROM KORAT AND WERE ATTACHED TO THE COMPANY WHILE IT WAS STILL IN SANGKHOM DISTRICT. BIGELOW

UNQUOTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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